

**Idaho Fish and Game Commission  
Quarterly Meeting May 16-18, 2007  
Sun Valley, Idaho**

**May 16, 2007**

Chairman Wheeler called the meeting to order at 1:30 p.m. Commissioners McDermott, Barowsky, Wright, Budge and Power were present. Commissioner Irby was absent.

Director Groen introduced panel guests Jim Karpowitz, Director, Utah Division of Wildlife Resources; and Clark Allan, Wyoming Game and Fish Commissioner.

**WORKSHOP**

**Mule Deer Initiative Workshop**

Department Staff provided a Mule Deer Initiative Status Report (Appendix 40, Exhibit 42) to the Commission. Topics covered in the presentation:

- Predator management, Steve Schmidt, Regional Supervisor, Upper Snake Region
- Enforcement actions
- Habitat manipulations, Dave Parrish, Regional Supervisor, Magic Valley Region
- Technical Assistance
- Mule Deer Population Management, Mark Gamblin, Regional Supervisor, Southeast Region
- Leveraging Resources
- Communications
- Measurable Objectives, Toby Boudreau, Regional Wildlife Biologist

Guest speakers included: Jim Karpowitz, Director, Utah Division of Wildlife Resources; Clark Allen, Wyoming Game and Fish Commissioner; and Jim Unsworth, Idaho Department of Fish and Game, Wildlife Bureau Chief. The speakers shared ideas and suggestions for mule deer from their respected state. Director Kapowitz commended Director Groen and staff on coming together and working on a common issue. He noted that it is important that sportsmen and wildlife agencies work together and have good lines of communication. An open panel discussion followed with Commissioners and guest speakers.

**MISCELLANEOUS**

**Public Meeting**

Chairman Wheeler called the meeting to order a 7:00 p.m. Commissioners McDermott, Barowsky, Wright, Budge and Power were present. Commissioner Irby was absent. Director Cal Groen introduced staff and the hearing was opened for public comment.

Jim Hagedorn thanked the Commission for appointing Cal Groen as the new Director. He referenced pheasants and would like to meet with Director Groen at a later date to talk about pheasants.

Jack Olyer stated he appreciates the Commissions selection of Cal Groen as the new Director. He thanked the Commission for the workshop on mule deer and thought it was very informative.

Byrd Golay complimented the Commission on the mule deer workshop; and spoke regarding the direction of leadership. He would like to see some of the seasons shortened and reduce the number of permits; and listen to the hunters in the field.

Doug Palmer spoke regarding Unit 54 and the doe tags being reduced in that area; and predator control funding.

Roger Blackner thanked the Commission for the mule deer workshop; Mr. Blackner would like for sportsmen to have a greater voice amongst the Commissioners.

Curt Burgess thanked the Commission for the mule deer workshop and feels that it was a step in the direction we all want and need.

Nate Helm, representing the Idaho Mule Deer Conservation and Management working group. Mr. Helm distributed a handout regarding the working group. Supporting organizations are:

- Deer Hunters of Idaho
- Idaho Sportsmen for Habitat
- Southeast Idaho Mule Deer Foundation
- Sportsmen for Fish and Wildlife Idaho
- West Side Sportsman's Association

Matt Douthitt, President, Deer Hunters of Idaho, noted that Deer Hunters of Idaho has been in the state for 20 years and their goal is to improve the deer herds in Idaho so that future hunters have the opportunity to hunt mule deer. The main goal is to make mule deer the number one priority.

Rust Tews, Board member, Idaho Sportsmen for Habitat, stated that their main goal is habitat.

Terry Taysom, Southeast Mule Deer Foundation, noted that it is impressive to get the sportsmen groups together who share a common goal.

Scott Allen, Sportsmen for Fish and Wildlife, thanked the Commission for the mule deer workshop.

**May 17, 2007**

**MISCELLANEOUS**

**Opening Comments**

Chairman Wheeler called the meeting to order at 8:00 a.m. Commissioners McDermott, Irby, Barowsky, Wright, Budge and Power were present.

Chairman Wheeler introduced Representatives Bert Stevenson and Fred Wood.

**Review of Public Comment**

Chairman Wheeler noted that comments received at the public meeting were favorable and very complimentary to the Commission. Director Groen noted that he spoke with Mr. Palmer to clarify his comments regarding money for predator control. Commissioner Power noted that both data and sportsmen are needed to manage wildlife.

**DIRECTOR'S REPORT**

Director Groen referenced highlights from Director Reports found in the Commission agenda book:

- Cash balance has continued to run well ahead of the prior year as a result of stronger than anticipated license and tag sales and a tight budget that restricts our spending on discretionary programs
- Outdoor Central licensing system will go live May 21
- Preparing for In Service Training School May 21-23
  - Governor Otter will speak to staff
- Statewide Fish Reports are available on the website
- “Commissioner Corner” debuts this month in the Department’s quarterly tabloid Fish and Game News featuring Commissioner Alex Irby
- “Hook and Bulletin” board posted at each vendor to inform constituents
- Five new Conservation Officers joining Fish and Game
- Grizzly bear mauling in Upper Snake Region
  - Staff did a good job of handling a difficult situation
- Compliments to the staff regarding 2007-2012 Fisheries Management Plan and the Conservation Plan for Management of Yellowstone Cutthroat Trout
- Dave Parrish is the Department representative for the Governor’s Advisory Group on the Eastern Snake Plain Aquifer
- Director Groen reported on the following meetings he attended:
- Governor’s Cabinet meeting March 7
  - Job description and business plan submitted to Governor at his request
- May 5<sup>th</sup> meeting with Idaho Sportsmen’s Caucus Advisory Council (ISCAC)
- Commissioner Wright and Director attended Idaho Fish and Wildlife Foundation meeting in Lewiston April 20-21

## Commission Reports

Panhandle Region: Commissioner McDermott reported on the following topics:

- Lake Pend Oreille predator reduction project awarded the “Outstanding Steward of America’s Water Award
- IDFG and Citizen’s Task Force teamed up to host two fishing clinics with over 150 people participating
- Wildlife Management in the Panhandle initiated projects to monitor black bears
- Wildlife Project to better assess the extent of caribou use in the Selkirks, to help address winter travel plan
- IDFG is working with Bonner County, Department of Agriculture on noxious weeds
- Attended Fish and Game appreciation BBQ sponsored by Bonner County Sportsmen and Kootenai Valley Sportsmen
- New record for northern pike taken from Lake Coeur d’Alene – 39 lbs. 13 oz.
- Lake Pend Oreille Fisheries Recovery Program
  - End of April 1,406 rainbow trout harvested and 4,900 lake trout

Clearwater Region: Commissioner Irby reported on the following:

Dworshak Reservoir Nutrient supplement program

- Good report for turkey, black bear and steelhead
- Sportsmen for Fish and Wildlife (SFW) hosted clean up day for Redbird Canyon
- Deyo Pond is moving forward
- Attended Idaho Fish and Wildlife Foundation Meeting in Lewiston
- Referenced State Managers Training Program
- Compliments Director Groen on his leadership of the Department
  - Hearing good comments from Governor’s office

Southwest Region: Commissioner Barowsky provided a report on the following:

- CJ Strike and Brownley Reservoir have tagged 500 small mouth bass and crappie with reward tags on each to monitor
- Creel study on CJ Strike and Swan Falls
- Urban pond work to create easy access for youth to fish
- Working with Parks and Recreation to hold week long fishing camps for youth during the summer months
- Horsethief reservoir will be low due to fish kill and no water to fill back up
- He referenced ATV violations in Unit 39 on closed trails in January

Magic Valley Region: Commissioner Wright reported on the following:

- Overall lek route surveys suggest a decline in the Magic Valley sage-grouse populations to levels observed in 2003-2004
- Mule deer surveys were challenging due to the early distribution of deer to higher elevations
- Habitat staff and volunteer coordinator busy with bitterbrush planting

- Mule Deer Initiative habitat activities carried out on private lands in Unit 56
- The first year of the Pilot Access Yes program produced mixed results with a total of 34 bids being received

Southeast Region: Commissioner Budge provided a report on the following:

- Weather is the greatest tangible factor in managing fish and wildlife
- The Region has been challenged with Mule Deer Initiative (MDI)
  - Commission to establish objectives for MDI to let sportsmen know success
- Feasibility study being done at Springfield Hatchery
- Work being done on creating two urban fisheries
- Blackfoot reservoir facing problems with drought and pelicans
- CREP sign ups have been lagging
- McCammon property acquisition is complete
  - Property is an addition to Georgetown WMA
- MDI Workshop is a good example of involving the sportsman
- Positive comments regarding Cal Groen as new director

Upper Snake Region: Commissioner Wheeler reported on the following:

- Grizzly Bear mauling
  - Staff handled the mauling in a very professional matter
- Participated in the Governor Otter's Capital for a Day at Island Park
- Compliments to Director Groen for his leadership on domestic elk and positive comments being made under the new director
- Reported on work completed at Henry's Lake and Island Park

Salmon Region: Commissioner Power reported on the following:

- Spring steelhead season on the upper part of the river was good
  - Kids Creek Pond in Salmon and Blue Mountain Pond in Challis will be stocked with the surplus fish
- Open houses held to discuss fishing regulation proposals have been held in 3 locations
  - At total of three people showed up
  - Commissioner Power suggested email as a tool to alert sportsmen of meetings in the area

## REPORTS

### Mule Deer Survey, Preliminary Overview

Nick Sanyal, Ph.D, Ed Krumpe, Ph.D and Brad Compton, State Big Game Manager, provided a preliminary overview of the mule deer survey (Appendix 40, Exhibit 43).

Two primary objectives of wildlife management are 1) to maintain healthy wildlife populations, and 2) to provide satisfactory recreation experiences. People seek

satisfaction from hunting for a variety of reasons including being close to nature, socializing with family and friends, developing hunting skills, harvesting, escaping from daily life demands, and seeking recognition from others. The Idaho Department Fish and Game and Fish and Game Commission strive to offer deer hunting opportunities consistent with diverse publicly desired experiences. Having a comprehensive understanding of hunter's attitudes, opinions, and management preferences is critical to providing for the types of hunting opportunities desired by sportsmen.

The Department contracted with the University of Idaho to conduct a scientifically-valid survey of Idaho mule deer hunters. The survey instrument was delivered to approximately 3,000 randomly selected mule deer hunters. Sample sizes were chosen to provide validity at the regional level. Additionally, a link to the survey was made available on the Department's website to provide additional opportunity for participation.

Results of the survey will be used to help establish statewide mule deer management direction and revise the statewide Mule Deer Management Plan during 2007 for implementation in 2008.

The survey will provide a contemporary assessment of mule deer hunter satisfaction and provide insight into why people hunt mule deer and what factors are important for a quality experience. Additionally, the survey will provide public attitudes and management preferences for a number of current mule deer management issues, including: 1) what defines buck quality, 2) motorized access, 3) management for large bucks, 4) antlerless harvest, 5) hunter congestion, and 6) mule deer versus elk.

### **Fawn Monitoring Summary**

Brad Compton, State Big Game Manager presented a summary report of fawn monitoring (Appendix 40, Exhibit 44). Mr. Compton noted that beginning in 1996, the Department intensified monitoring of mule deer populations to better estimate over-winter survival using aerial surveys, radio telemetry, and field observations. This information is critical for quickly responding to fluctuating populations caused by varying winter conditions.

Mule deer generally experienced relatively mild conditions during the 2006/2007 winter with below normal snowfall and above normal temperatures. Current information on over-winter survival indicates moderate to high fawn survival throughout most of Southern Idaho.

### **Fish and Game Advisory Committee Update**

Brad Compton introduced Chairman John Romero, Fish and Game Advisory Committee who provided update on (FGAC) activities to the Commission (Appendix 40, Exhibit 45).

The Fish & Game Advisory Committee (FGAC) was legislatively created in 1989 (Idaho Code 36-122) and consists of 6 sportsmen representatives (appointed by Fish & Game

Director) and 6 agricultural representatives (appointed by State Department of Agriculture Director). The committee was created to:

- “1. Act as a liaison between the commission, landowners, the department of agriculture, the department of fish and game, and wildlife, outdoor recreation and sportsmen's organizations;*
- 2. Act as an independent resource to give advice and recommendations on administration of the programs authorized in sections 36-1108 and 36-1109, Idaho Code.”*

From February to April, 2007 the committee held 7 public meetings throughout Idaho, including Coeur d'Alene, Lewiston, Boise, Jerome, Pocatello, Idaho Falls, and Salmon. Purpose of the meetings was:

- 1) to discuss the problem of keeping private land that is valuable for wildlife habitat from being lost to development, and
- 2) to provide an informational exchange on existing Idaho landowner programs and how the programs can be improved

Additionally, former Director Huffaker requested the committee facilitate discussions between landowners and sportsmen on how private land access for sportsmen and private land habitat can be maintained or improved.

These meetings also provided an opportunity for landowners and sportsmen to better understand each others' perspectives and to realize they have more in common than generally perceived.

Invitations were sent to individuals identified by regional Fish and Game personnel and members of FGAC. Each meeting consisted of a presentation by Fish and Game regarding the Landowner/Sportsman Program (Landowner Appreciation Program, *Access Yes!* and the Depredation Prevention/Compensation Program), and presentations by representatives from the Natural Resources and Conservation Service and Farm Services Agency. After the presentations, landowners and sportsmen participated in a nominal group process to generate and prioritize solutions to private land access and private land habitat issues.

Chairman Wheeler noted that he would like to see better communication between the Commission, Director and the Committee so that all are on the same track.

### **CONSENT CALENDAR**

**07-65 Commissioner Barowsky moved and Commissioner Irby seconded a motion TO ADOPT THE NOVEMBER 1-3, DECEMBER 8, AND DECEMBER 19, 2006 MINUTES AND THE FINANCIAL REPORT AS PRESENTED IN THE CONSENT CALENDAR. The motion carried in a unanimous vote.**

## REPORT

### Comprehensive Wildlife Conservation Strategy Update

Chuck Harris, Nongame Wildlife Program Manager provided a report to the Commission (Appendix 40, Exhibit 46). Mr. Harris reported that in 2001, the Department began receiving federal State Wildlife Grant (SWG) funds to focus on species and habitats in greatest need of conservation. This proactive species conservation approach is intended to keep species from being listed under the Endangered Species Act and maintain state management authority. To continue receiving SWG funds the Department developed a Comprehensive Wildlife Conservation Strategy (CWCS) addressing eight required elements and submitted it to the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service for approval by September 2005. The Idaho CWCS was approved in February 2006. SWG funding, matched 50:50 with nongame funds, has allowed the Department to put nongame wildlife biologists in each regional office, rebuild the Idaho Conservation Data Center's zoology program and animal conservation database, and develop a statewide coordinated bird monitoring program. A portion of each year's SWG allocation is also dedicated to a third-party grants program to engage interested conservation partners in helping implement the CWCS.

### Pheasant Stocking Budget on WMA Locations

Jeff Gould provided a report to the Commission (Appendix 40, Exhibit 47).

- Pheasants stocking increased in 2000 due to legislative direction.
- Pheasants are currently stocked on 9 WMAs during hunting season.
- 1 in 4 pheasant hunters use WMAs to hunt.
- Youth pheasant season provides opportunity to mentor new hunters.
- Cost of birds increased beyond funds generated by sale of WMA permits.
- Provide opportunities specific to the needs of beginners, youth, people with disabilities and families is a strategy of Department's *Compass*.
- Use artificial stocking where appropriate and cost effective is a strategy of Department's *Compass*.
- Support mentoring programs for new hunters is a strategy of Department's *Compass*.
- Assess participation, demand, and satisfaction with hunting opportunities. Adjust management to achieve objectives is strategy of Department's *Compass*.
- Annual survey information gathered by a random sample of WMA pheasant permit buyers.
- Pheasant vendors selected by state competitive bid process.
- The price per bird increased 32-69 percent compared to price per bird in 2006. Prices varied dependent upon the delivery distance to the WMAs.
- Pheasant hunting activities and cost per bird in the bag varies greatly between WMAs.
- Contract may be modified or re-bid next year

The Department will continue to stock pheasants at 9 WMAs for one more year. Gather public input about reducing the stocking rate or generating more revenue to finance the increasing operational costs.

## RULES

### Rules: Turkey Changes Panhandle Region

Jeff Gould provided a report and the Departments recommendations to the Commission (Appendix 40, Exhibit 48).

- Winter flocks of wild turkey in Units 1, 2, 3 and 5 have increased beyond property owner's levels of tolerance
- Since 2004, 730 turkeys have been trapped and moved from Panhandle region winter flocks without a noticeable reduction in hunting opportunity or following year's depredation concerns
- Hens and toms harvested during same fall season
- Increase hunting opportunity is a strategy of the Department's Compass
- Adapt regulations to achieve population objective is a strategy of the Department's *Compass*
- Commission has authority to reduce tag price
- Regions provided the public with opportunities to comment on Department proposed changes
- A questionnaire was e-mailed to a sample of turkey hunters
- Complaints filed by landowners.

Seasons and bag limits are designed to manage Idaho's wild turkey population for maximum hunting opportunity while considering biological and sociological implications.

Department Recommendation:

Recommendations are designed to increased fall harvest of turkeys in Panhandle units where turkey populations are high and landowner complaints persist. The goal is to find an equilibrium where public hunting is sustainable and conflicts on private lands are reduced and tolerated. Trapping and translocation from these units will continue to augment other populations when appropriate.

- Panhandle region fall season is September 15 through October 31 in Units 1, 2 (except Farragut State Park and Farragut WMA), 3, 4, 4A, 5, and 6.  
**Department Recommendation: Extend fall season to December 15 in Units 1, 2 (except Farragut State Park and Farragut WMA), 3, 4, 4A, 5, and 6**
- Fall hunting turkey tag prices are either \$19.75 for general tag or \$12.25 for extra tags, including the vendor fee.

**Department Recommendation: Create a fall general season turkey tag valid for units 1, 2, 3 and 5. Price of tag would be \$5.00, including the vendor fee for Idaho residents. Hunters would be able to purchase up to 3 of these tags.**

- Current Bag limit is 2 any turkeys in the fall.  
**Department recommendation: A person may harvest turkeys equal in number of valid tags held for turkeys in Units 1, 2, 3 and 5 for the 2007 fall season.**

**07-66 Commissioner McDermott moved and Commissioner Irby seconded a motion TO ACCEPT THE DEPARTMENT RECOMMENDATION FOR TURKEY SEASONS. The motion carried in a unanimous vote.**

**Rules: Sandhill Crane and Dove**

Tom Hemker provided a report to the Commission (Appendix 40, Exhibit 49).

Early goose, sandhill crane, and dove seasons are set in the spring to allow permits to be issued during the summer and seasons to open as early as September 1. Idaho's 2007 crane harvest allocation as directed by the Pacific Flyway Council RMP Crane Plan is 306 similar to the 336 in 2006. Harvest in 2006 was 236.

These seasons are generally used to manage problem goose populations and allow harvest of cranes that nest in Idaho before migration begins. Crane depredation on grain crops is a problem in some areas. The dove season is the earliest allowed by treaty and is unchanged since 1988.

The Upper Snake and Southeast regions issued news releases and held open houses concerning sandhill crane seasons. The Southeast region met with grain farmers impacted by crane depredation in Caribou County.

Crane hunting continues to be popular and early goose seasons are unnecessary with the recently extended 107-day regular goose hunting season. The proposed dove season is the earliest and most liberal allowed by federal frame work.

The Department's recommendations are:

- Do not offer any early goose seasons. The regular goose season is expected to be 107 days statewide and should provide adequate harvest of resident Canada geese.
- Adopt the sandhill crane season as follows with a daily limit of 2 and a season limit of 9. The first tag is offered through a standard controlled-hunt drawing and the other 8 are available at any vendor as left-over tags.

<b>Hunt Area</b>	<b>Season</b>	<b>Permits</b>
Caribou and Bear Lake counties	9/1-15	300

Teton County	9/1-7	40
“	9/8-15	40
Fremont County	9/1-7	40
“	9/8-15	40
Bonneville County	9/1-7	10
“	9/8-15	10
Jefferson County	9/1-7	10
“	9/8-15	10

- No change to the mourning dove season, which is 9/1-30 and a bag of 10 and 20.

**07-67 Commissioner Irby moved and Commissioner McDermott seconded a motion TO ACCEPT THE DEPARTMENT RECOMMENDATION FOR 2007 EARLY GOOSE, DOVE, AND SANDHILL CRANE SEASONS. The motion carried in a unanimous vote.**

### FISCAL

#### FY08 Budget Approval

Jim Lau, Chief, Administration presented the Department’s FY08 Budget to the Commission. The Fish and Game appropriation of \$74,067,600 for fiscal year 2008 has been approved by the Legislature and signed by the Governor.

**07-68 Commissioner Barowsky moved and Commissioner Irby seconded a motion TO FORMALLY ADOPT THE DEPARTMENT FY08 BUDGET. The motion carried in a unanimous vote.**

### MISCELLANEOUS

Representative Bert Stevenson noted that he appreciates the Legislative work that Ms. Sharon Kiefer is doing; and thanked the Commission for keeping the Committee abreast of Department activities.

Representative Fred Wood stated that he is looking forward to working with the Director Groen and Commission in the future, on increased revenue sources for the Department.

### REPORT

#### Fish and Game Dedicated Funds

Jeff Gould provided a report to the Commission (Appendix 40, Exhibit 50).

Dedicated funds and set-aside accounts are established by the Fish and Game Commission or the Idaho Legislature to assure adequate financial resources are available for specific services provided by the department. Several dedicated funds were created to

structure or improve financial practices such as budget stabilization, fleet management, and the handling of donations. The remaining funds were created to manage money that is set-aside for specific purposes such as BPA Mitigation at Craig Mountain, big game depredations, salmon and steelhead fishing access, habitat acquisition and development, winter feeding, and non-game management. Previous discussions probed the question “can these funds be combined and used with greater flexibility?” The intent was to consolidate funds and become nimble enough to allocate adequate resources to top priorities in a timely manner. Ultimately, these dedicated funds support critical functions and services, are narrow in scope by design, and may not be the right solution for this concept.

This presentation reviewed the list of dedicated funds for background purposes but will also cover current and future costs associated with land management, *Access Yes*, and habitat initiatives to substantiate the increasing costs associated with several priority programs. These programs are supported by dedicated funds but also involve traditional license funds, federal funds, and competitive grants. These examples will serve as a platform to begin breaking down the question of how to develop a broad and sustainable funding base that helps the department manage its bottom line, the strategic plan?

- How will the Commission ensure “all that pay benefit and all that benefit pay” and traditional license fee increases are stabilized?
- What alternative funding sources seem to compliment traditional funding sources the best in Idaho? Which will be supported by the Legislature and citizens of Idaho?

The Department has formed a funding committee charged with exploring the possibility of various funding mechanisms to broaden the Department’s funding base. Committee products and information will be presented to the Legislative Ad Hoc IDFG Committee by the Department Legislative Liaison. The Legislative Ad Hoc IDFG Funding Committee will be comprised of three senators, three representatives and three commissioners.

### **Wolf Update**

Steve Nadeau, Large Carnivore Manager, provided a report to the Commission on the Wolf Harvest Management Plan, delisting update, and the wilderness monitoring program (Appendix 40, exhibit 51).

Mr. Nadeau stated that the main points for developing the harvest strategy are:

- Maintain more than the 15 breeding pair minimum that precludes relisting under provision of the ESA
- Allow wolves to persist where they do not cause excessive conflicts with humans or human activities
- Minimize conflicts and adverse impacts where they occur
- Manage for a self-sustaining, viable wolf population that provides for a balance of values and uses

A biological working group will provide management framework and biological input on the Harvest Plan; and a public working group who will ensure the conservation and

management of state wildlife is compatible with public desires. A public survey will be drafted, public open houses for the public to review the Harvest Plan will be scheduled for August – September. The draft plan will be presented to the Commission at its November meeting.

Mr. Nadeau noted that the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service published a delisting rule for wolves on February 7. The comment period on the delisting rule was extended to May 9. Staff working with the Governor's office drafted a response to the proposal (Appendix 40, Exhibit 52). USFWS decided to move forward with delisting without Wyoming. Fish and Wildlife Service will review and analyze comments through the summer.

The Department has been planning what wolf management as a big game animal will look like and the planning team held its first public Wolf Working Group meeting April 23.

Mr. Nadeau stated that Michael Lucid will be heading a team of five to work on the wilderness monitoring program. Objectives are to:

- Find and radio collar un-documented wolf packs in the Selway-Bitterroot Wilderness Area
- Determine if wolf rendezvous site model can be used to predict area of high probability of wolf detection
- Document rendezvous sites
- Use track and scat data to develop a model predicting wolf travel corridors

Our level of management planning and involvement has increased over the last year, and will continue to do so through delisting. The transition to state management has been ongoing since 2002 and we are now preparing to take over management as a big game animal.

Jim Unsworth, Chief of Wildlife, spoke regarding the possible updated 10(j) amendment. The current 10(j) provides considerable latitude for livestock producers to protect their livestock but fell short for the Department and sportsmen in dealing with the impacts of wolves on ungulates and private livestock and hunting dogs on public land. It was proposed to modify the 10(j) rule to allow people to protect their hunting dogs and pack stock on public land. And to change the wording on at what point the Department could control wolves for ungulates. The wording would be changed to instead of the primary cause of a decline to something like the primary cause of mortality. This would give the Department more flexibility. The draft is expected to be out for review in June.

### **Update Lolo Wolf Control Proposal**

Mr. Unsworth noted that staff continue to collect data on elk mortality. Survival of adult cows is 80% with 70 % of mortality caused by wolves. His recommendation is to continue to collect data and not go forward with the proposal at this time.

## LEGISLATION

### 2007 Legislative Wrap Up

Sharon Kiefer, Legislative Liaison, provided a summary of key Commission and/ or Department actions needed to implement the 2007 Legislation that becomes law on July 1, 2007. Ms. Kiefer noted that other bills that may affect the Department are summarized in the attached Senate Bill and House Bill lists (Appendix 40, Exhibit 53).

Bills covered in the summary:

- House Concurrent Resolution 16
- Senate Bill 1010
- Senate Bill 1011
- Senate Bill 1086
- House Bill 303
- House Bill 325
- Senate Bill 1055
- Senate Bill 1128a

Please see <http://www.legislature.idaho.gov/> to see the specifics of legislation, committee minutes, house and senate journals.

Ms. Kiefer reported on the funding committee that was an outcome of the 2007 session for a development of a committee of legislators and commissioners to work collaboratively on Department funding issues.

The funding committee members are:

Senators: Gary Schroeder, Dean Cameron Clint Stennett

Representatives: Bert Stevenson, Fred Wood, George Sayler

Commissioners: Cameron Wheeler, Wayne Wright, Tony McDermott

## MISCELLANEOUS

### Executive Session

**07-69 Commissioner Barowsky moved and Commissioner Wright seconded a motion TO HOLD AN EXECUTIVE SESSION, PURSUANT TO IDAHO CODE 67-2345(1)(C) PERTAINING TO PERSONNEL. The motion carried in a unanimous vote.**

The executive session ended at 7:29 p.m. and no official action was taken.

### May 18, 2007

## **REPORT**

### **Spring Chinook Season Report**

Sharon Kiefer provided an update (Appendix 40, exhibit 54) on the Chinook salmon run. Ms. Kiefer reported the Bonneville Dam return to date is 56,000 and is still on target with a preseason projection of over 78,500 upper river spring Chinook and this includes the forecast for Snake River summer Chinook. The timing is late this year but not as late as last year and a low run size.

Lower Granite Dam still tracking on preseason forecast of almost 28,000 for spring and summer Chinook.

Ms. Kiefer reported that it is still too early to update the preseason forecast of about 1,750 McCall Fish Hatchery adults returning over Lower Granite Dam. Staff will recommend a conference call for rulemaking in June.

### **2008-2009 Fishing Rules Development Timeline**

Steve Yundt, Chief, Fisheries, presented the 2008-2009 Fishing rules time line for development process (Appendix 40, Exhibit 55). Mr. Yundt noted that every two years, the Commission establishes the general fishing rules. The Fisheries Bureau is now beginning the process of reviewing rule modifications to be considered for 2006 and 2007. At this time, the Bureau will provide the Commission with proposed time lines for the 2007 review process. Additionally, in providing this information to the Commission, it will provide the Commission the opportunity to request that the Fisheries Bureau review specific portions on the fishing rules.

Currently the regions are beginning public scoping of any potential rule modifications with open houses and local meetings along with any personal communications that the Department receives. After this information is compiled and evaluated, rule modification proposals will be presented to the Commission for public review. This review process will occur during July into September. Final public input will be received at the Commission public meeting on November 7, 2007 prior to the Commission establishing fishing rules for 2008-2009.

### **Idaho Fish and Wildlife Foundation Report**

Gayle Valentine, Executive Director, updated the Commission on the Idaho Fish and Wildlife Foundation (IFWF). Items of interest:

- New Board of Director Officers were elected at April 2007 board meeting
- April Board meeting Tour of Redbird
  - Hosted by Department Staff Jim White and Jerome Hanson
- Ms. Valentine noted that everything is finalized with the Redbird Lease and option to purchase

- Building Modification requests from Salmon and Idaho Falls have all been completed
  - New procedure for modification requests
  - Evaluated through Department Engineering Bureau
  - Reviewed by Director
  - Presented to IFWF Board
- The online auction raised over \$7,000 for habitat
- Working with Director on staffing issues for Treasurer and Administrative Assistant
- Wildlife License plates will be digitized in the near future in coordination with Idaho Department of Transportation
- August IFWF meeting will be in Idaho Falls

### **Lost River Whitefish Management Plan**

Steve Yundt, Chief of Fisheries, provided a report on the Mountain Whitefish Conservation and Management Plan for the Big Lost River Drainage (Appendix 40, Exhibit 56). Mr. Yundt noted that the Department and other parties have increased planning efforts and implemented conservation actions to offset recent declines in the distribution and abundance of mountain whitefish in the Big Lost River drainage. This population is isolated from and genetically distinct from other mountain whitefish populations in the Snake River Basin. Sampling has indicated that mountain whitefish currently occupy around 24% of their historical range in the Big Lost River drainage, while adult abundance is only about 1.5% of historical levels. Potential factors affecting Big Lost River mountain whitefish are described in the plan. Specific population objectives are identified both above and below Mackay Dam. A number of management actions are presented to enhance habitat and population numbers.

The 2007 – 2012 Fisheries Management Plan identifies the specific development of a species management plan for mountain whitefish in the Big Lost River drainage of eastern Idaho. The Department’s strategic plan has a goal to “Improve public understanding of and involvement in fish and wildlife management.” This species management plan considers public desires and biological needs and sets management direction and goals. The Commission establishes policy and provides direction, considers input from the public, and has the authority to adopt, amend, or reject Department-recommended plans. The Fisheries Bureau seeks Commission approval of the Mountain Whitefish Conservation and Management Plan for the Big Lost River Drainage.

The Department posted the management plan on its website in late March 2007 and solicited comments from the public and others **throughout April 2007**. A summary of comments received and the Department responses are being provided for Commission review.

There has been a recent emergency petition for listing the Big Lost River mountain whitefish as a threatened or endangered species under the Endangered Species Act. The

Department believes it is in the best interests of the state fish and wildlife agency and other involved parties to have a Commission-approved species management plan in place to guide staff efforts in managing this native fish species. Public comment has been appropriately considered and incorporated. The plan is ready for approval by the Commission.

**07-70 Commissioner Budge moved and Commissioner Barowsky seconded a motion TO ACCEPT THE DEPARTMENT RECOMMENDATION OF THE MOUNTAIN WHITEFISH CONSERVATION AND MANAGEMENT PLAN FOR THE BIG LOST RIVER DRAINAGE. The motion carried in a unanimous vote.**

## RULES

### Commercial Fishing Rule Modification

Steve Yundt, Chief of Fisheries presented the Department recommendations for commercial fishing rules (Appendix 40, Exhibit 57). Mr. Yundt noted a commercial fishing license has been requested by a group of anglers to fish for common carp using a gill net. While Department staff feels this type of fishery in selected waters would be a benefit to both the resource by reducing common carp numbers and to anglers desiring these species as a food fish, current wording of the Commercial Fishing Rules IDAPA 13.01.12 does not give the authority to allow gill nets. The Department does not want to establish general rules allowing gill nets, but is interested in being able to allow their use on a water by water basis where species such as common carp are the predominant species and other methods of fishing are inappropriate due to excessive cost to the angler or limited access for other gear types.

The general list of fish species available to commercial anglers has not been updated since 1993 and includes a number of nongame fish species that are currently listed in the Idaho Comprehensive Wildlife Conservation Strategy (CWCS). These species are either listed as either in need of conservation actions or insufficient information to determine status. Having the same species listed as a Commercial species available for unlimited harvest would be in conflict of this Strategy. Due to limited numbers, range, and low economic value of these species, we currently are not seeing any commercial harvest of the species proposed to be removed from the Commercial fish list.

Rule modification for gear types has been requested by the public. A news release regarding the proposal was issued and information was provided on the Department's website. To date (4-26-07), no public comments have been received.

Commissioner McDermott asked Mr. Yundt if lake superior whitefish in Lake Pend Oreille were on the list of species that could be harvested commercially?

Mr. Yundt said no, lake superior whitefish were not on the list of species that could be harvested commercially.

Mr. McDermott stated that he did not know if they wanted to add to the list or not; but if we were looking at the possibility of a commercial white fishery on Lake Pend Oreille.

McDermott referenced the study being done on lake superior white fish.

Mr. Yundt stated that he sees no reason why we do not have it on the list and it was an oversight. It would be appropriate to add it with the caveat that we are not at this point authorizing commercial harvest of whitefish but are moving in that direction if it is approved and supported by the users in the area. It would not hurt to add lake superior whitefish here now so we could avoid some requirements that the director makes special dispensation for that kind of situation. Mr. Yundt supports that.

**07- 71 Commissioner McDermott moved and Commissioner Power seconded a motion TO ACCEPT THE DEPARTMENT RECOMMENDATIONS TO THE COMMERCIAL FISHING RULES WITH THE AMENDMENT TO ADD SUPERIOR LAKE FISH TO THE LIST OF COMMERCIAL FISH SPECIES. The motion carried in a unanimous vote.**

## LANDS

### Land Legacy Project Update

Gregg Servheen and Tracey Trent provided an update to the Commission (Appendix 40, Exhibit 58).

During the May 2006 workshop in Coeur d'Alene, Idaho; the Commission heard IDFG staff presentations about how accelerating changes in Idaho land use threaten fish and wildlife habitats and populations, fish and wildlife recreation, and public access.

During the workshop the Department presented ideas on how the Department might best address these issues. These ideas focused on developing a funding source using an endowment or trust, to provide a tool to work with landowners such as ranchers, private timberland owners, farmers, and citizens to steward both Idaho's fish and wildlife in concert with working landscapes.

Since then, Department staff has been moving these ideas forward and is providing an update to the Commission a year later. Information in this update include status reports on: 1) development of the Idaho Land Legacy report, 2) efforts to negotiate settlement agreements for wildlife mitigation debt with BPA and Tribal partners, 3) sale of surplus lands, and 4) establishment of a Land Legacy Trust or Endowment.

## **REPORT**

### **Demonstration of Fishing Planner**

Tim Williams, Sr. GIS Analyst gave a demonstration of the Idaho Fishing Planner system. He noted that the Idaho Fishing Planner was developed by the Idaho Fish and Wildlife Information System (IFWIS) section of the Natural Resource Policy Bureau as a companion to the Idaho Hunt Planner. The system has been in development for 2 years.

The Idaho Fishing Planner will be put on the Department website for the public to use in planning fishing trips.

## **MISCELLANEOUS**

### **Adjournment**

The Commission meeting adjourned at 10:35a.m.

---

Cameron Wheeler  
Chairman

---

Cal Groen  
Secretary